

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 07638 091529Z

62

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 090828Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6552

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 7638

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, LA, VN

SUBJECT: LE DUAN VISIT TO SAM NEUA AND TIMING OF FORMATION OF
PGNU

REF: VIENTIANE 7629

SUMMARY: LAO LEADERS EXPRESSED CONCERN LAST NIGHT THAT LE DUAN VISIT TO SAM NEUA MAY DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF LAO PROTOCOL BUT LPF DELEGATION CHIEF, PHOUN SIPRASEUTH, EMPHASIZED TO US THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE THE CASE. HOWEVER, HE ALSO STRESSED THAT ELABORATE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED BY TWO SIDES WITHIN JCIA FORUM BEFORE LPF MINISTERS COULD COME TO VIENTIANE AND NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FOUR-DAY VISIT OF A HIGH RANKING DRV DELEGATION TO SAM NEUA WAS THE MAIN TOPIC OF CONVERSATION AT LAST NIGHT'S FRENCH EMBASSY RECEPTION. EARLIER IN THE AFTERNOON AN AFP TICKER ITEM
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 07638 091529Z

DISTRIBUTED WIDELY IN VIENTIANE REPORTED THAT SECRETARY GENERAL

OF LAO DONG PARTY, LE DUAN, HAD VISITED SAM NEUA AND SPECULATED THAT PERHAPS ALSO KHMER ROUGE REPRESENTATIVES HAD ATTENDED MEETING THERE. SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND PHENG PHONGSAVAN TOLD US THAT THEY THOUGHT SAM NEUA GATHERING MIGHT BE "INDOCHINA FRONT" MEETING AT WHICH HANOI'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS LAO SOLUTION WAS DISCUSSED.

2. SINCE PHOUN SIPRASEUTH WAS AT THE SAME RECEPTION, WE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN DIRECTLY FROM HIM HIS INTERPRETATION OF THIS VISIT. PHOUN SAID THAT DRV DELEGATION ARRIVED SAM NEUA NOVEMBER 2 AND DEPARTED NOVEMBER 6. DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY LAO DONG SECRETARY GENERAL LE DUAN AND INCLUDED DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HOANG ANH AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE DONG. PHOUN DENIED THAT KHMER ROUGE ALSO ATTENDED THIS MEETING. PHOUN EXPLAINED VISIT OF DRV DELEGATION AS RETURN ENGAGEMENT FOR PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG'S OFFICIAL VISIT TO HANOI IN 1971. WHEN WE EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT THIS WAS REAL MOTIVE FOR VISIT, PHOUN ADDED THAT LE DUAN HAD JUST RETURNED FROM PEKING AND MOSCOW WHILE PRIME MINISTER PHAN VAN DONG HAD VISITED OTHER CAPITALS IN COMMUNIST EUROPE. HE CLEARLY LEFT IMPRESSION THAT LE DUAN WENT TO SAM NEUA TO INFORM LPF CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIET AND CHINESE LEADERS.

3. WE THEN ASKED PHOUN WHETHER LAO SETTLEMENT WAS DISCUSSED AND WHETHER RLG FEARS THAT HANOI MIGHT URGE LPF TO SLOW DOWN IMPLEMENTATION OF PROTOCOL WAS JUSTIFIED. SPECIFICALLY, WE ASKED WHETHER DRV DELEGATION VISIT MIGHT AFFECT TIMING ON FORMATION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT. PHOUN REPLIED THAT HANOI HAD NOT REPEAT NOT VOICED ANY OPPOSITION TO THE LAO SETTLEMENT AND THAT LPF REMAIN COMMITTED TO EARLY FORMATION OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT.

4. PHOUN THEN EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH ARRIVAL OF LPF CONTINGENTS IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AND SAID THAT AS SOON AS LPF RECEIVE APPROPRIATE OFFICE SPACE FOR THEIR DELEGATION TO THE JOINT COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT (JCIA), LATTER COULD FORMALLY START OPERATING. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT ONCE JCIA BECOMES OPERATIONAL, THE TWO LAO SIDES WOULD HAVE TO WORK OUT SPECIFIC ARRANGEMENTS ON SECURITY IN DETAIL BEFORE LPF MINISTERS CAME TO VIENTIANE. WHILE PHOUN DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAY SO, HE CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT THE FORMATION OF THE COALITION

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 07638 091529Z

GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE IRONING OUT OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS AND THAT MAY TAKE SOME TIME.

4. THE THRUST OF PHOUN'S REMARKS INDICATE THAT LE DUAN'S VISIT TO SAM NEUA WOULD NOT CHANGE LPF POLICY OF RECONCILIATION BUT THAT SAM NEUA WOULD INSIST ON ELABORATION OF ADEQUATE SECURITY CONDITIONS BEFORE LPF MINISTERS CAME TO VIENTIANE AND COALITION GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED.

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